

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PORT L 00559 101137Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-08 SS-15 SP-02 L-03 INR-10 /049 W
-----059160 101144Z /14-R

R 100835Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7489
INFO AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

UNCLAS PORT LOUIS 0559

NAIROBI FOR REDSO/FFPO

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EAID, MP
SUBJECO: PL 480 - TITLE I FOOD FOR MAURITIUS

REF: (A) PORT LOUIS 419 (NOTAL); (B) STATE 11834 (NOTAL)

1. FOLLOWING RECEIPT REF (B) WE HAVE HAD FURTHER DISCUSSIONS WITH GOM REGARDING POSSIBILITY OF INITIATION OF A PL 480 TITLE I PROGRAM. WE INDICATED THAT PROGRAM POSSIBLE, THOUGH UNLIKELY, IN FY 78, WITH STRONGER POSSIBILITY OF INITIATING PROGRAM IN FY 79. WE SUGGESTED THAT IF GOM INTERESTED, A FORMAL REQUEST WOULD BE APPROPRIATE AT THIS TIME. WE SPOKE IN TERMS OF A LEVEL OF DOLS ONE MILLION PER ANNUM, THOUGH WE RECEIVED INDICATION THAT GOM MIGHT WISH TO ASK FOR AS MUCH AS DOLS THREE MILLION PER ANNUM.

2. WE HAVE NOW RECEIVED FORMAL REQUEST FROM GOM IN FORM OF

LETTER DATED MAY 8, 1978 TO AMBASSADOR FROM PRIME MINISTER RAMGOOLAM, AS FOLLOWS.

BEGIN TEXT: YOUR EXCELLENCY, THE GOVERNMENT OF MAURITIUS WOULD WISH TO AVAL ITSELF OF THD FACILITIES PROVIDED UNDER THE TERMS OF THE UNITED STATES AGRICULTURAL TRADE DEVELOPMENT AND ASSISTANCE
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ACT OF 1954 (PL480-TITLE I) AND HEREBY APPLIES FOR A CONSENSIONAL LOAN TO PURCHASE UP TO 32,500 TONS RICE FROM THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

THE GOVERNMENT OF MAURITIUS IMPORTS ANUALLY ABOUT 75,000 TONS OF RICE WHICH REPRESENTS ABOUT 90 PERCENT OF THE RICE REQUIREMENTS OF THE COUNTRY. OUR TRADITIONAL SUPPLIERS OF RICE ARE BURMA

AND THAILAND BUT LATELY WE HAVE ALSO BEEN PURCHASING RICE FROM THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA. OUR TRADITIONAL SUPPLIERS HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE SO FAR TO SUPPLY ANY RICE TO US THIS YEAR AND FOR THIS REASON WE HAVE NEGOTIATED FOR THE FIRST TIME THE PURCHASE OF 18,500 TONS OF RICE FROM NEPAL. WE HAVE ALSO NEGOTIATED THE PURCHASE OF 24,000 TONS OF RICE FROM THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA. WE ARE THEREFORE STILL SHORT OF SOME 32,500 TONS OF RICE TO MEET OUR ANNUAL REQUIREMENTS AND THIS QUANTITY NEEDS TO BE PURCHASED BY SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER NEXT AT LATEST IN ORDER TO AVOID ANY SHORTAGE OF OUR STAPLE COMMODITY.

THE GOVERNMENT OF MAURITIUS PROPOSES TO UTILIZE THE PROCEEDS FROM THE SALE OF RICE FOR FINANCING OUR AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS.

I SHALL BE GRATEFUL IF YOUR GOVERNMENT WOULD GIVE FAVOURABLE CONSIDERATION TO OUR REQUEST. WE WOULD BE PLEASED TO SUPPLY THE RELEVANT DATA FOR DETERMINING THE EXTENT OF THE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

WITH ASSURANCES OF MY HIGHEST CONSIDERATION. VERY
SINCERELY YOURS, S. RAMGOOLAM, PRIME MINISTER. END TEXT

3. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH THIS REQUEST FAR EXCEEDS WHAT USG IS LIKELY TO BE ABLE TO PROGRAM FOR MAURITIUS, AS WELL AS EXCEEDING WHAT GOM COULD USE WITHIN A REASONABLE PERIOD OF TIME FOR FINANCING
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AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS, WE PROPOSE TO PROCEED WITH PREPARATION OF NECESSARY DATA AND ANALYSIS TO SUPPORT AN EMBASSY RECOMMENDATION FOR A PROGRAM OF MORE MODEST SIZE, WITH EMPHASIS ON STRONG DEVELOPMENT RATIONALE. TO ASSIST US WE HAVE REQUESTED VISIT LATER THIS MONTH BY AID REGIONAL FOOD FOR PEACE OFFICER FROM NAIROBI.

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